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Divinity.



A SERMON ON COL. III. 1, 2, 3, 4.

(Concluded from page 88.)

PERHAPS we cannot better improve this subject than by using it, first, as a ground of self-examination. To apply the word of truth to our own hearts, in such a manner as to make it a rule by which to judge impartially and correctly of our religious state, it must be confessed, is not an easy task; and the difficulties which attend it, frequently prevent one of the most important ends of the Christian ministry—that *true knowledge* of ourselves, without which there can be no stability in religion. Thousands who sit under the ministry of the word, and approve, and perhaps extol the discourses they hear, are very little benefitted. The reason is obvious—they do not apply those truths they hear to their own hearts and lives. The subject is to them a kind of abstract theory. Would to God that truth did not compel us to say that this is the case with multitudes whose names are enrolled among the professed disciples of Jesus Christ.

What little progress in the spiritual life—what superficial attainments in Christian virtues, do we perceive, even in those who have grown up in the sunshine of the gospel? who were carried to the house of God in their childhood, and who have been constant attendants on the preaching of the word for a long succession of years? Would this be the case if every hearer received the word as if it were spoken directly and individually to him? as if it were designed, not merely to move his passions, and engage his imagination, but to search the depth of his heart, and bring every exercise of it to the touchstone of unadulterated truth? to unveil every hidden deformity, and

bring to full view every moral feature of the soul? Did those who hear the word of God receive it in this way, it would indeed be like seed sown in good ground. Our congregations would flourish like willows by the water courses; and instead of trifling and vanity, our assemblies would be adorned with the beauties of holiness. Instead of general remarks on the speaker, and his performance, each one would be most forward to speak of the suitableness of the subject, or particular parts of it, to his own state; wherein he derived confirmation and comfort from perceiving the agreement between the gospel character, and his own experience, and wherein he found himself wanting.

It is hoped these general remarks will not be considered altogether foreign from our subject; especially as they are designed to prepare the way for the more effectual improvement of the preceding discourse.

The state of our affection, with reference both to earthly and heavenly things, is the important matter which now invites our particular inquiry. The following interrogations may be found of great use in endeavouring to ascertain our true state.

Have I ever been thoroughly convinced of the entire insufficiency of all earthly things to afford me solid happiness? Under this conviction, have I voluntarily renounced the world, with all its pleasures, riches and honours, giving up all expectation and desire of deriving happiness from them? Have I ever perceived the fitness and excellency of spiritual things,—their suitableness to my nature and my wants? Have I ever cordially, and with a *settled purpose of mind* embraced these things as my great interest, and supreme delight? What influence has the fluctuations and changes of worldly things had upon me? Have I been elated with prosperity? have I been depressed and disheartened by adversity? Which gives me the most sensible pain and affliction of mind, the loss of earthly things and disappointments in prospects of temporal prosperity, or a consciousness of deficiency in the graces of the spirit, and barrenness of soul in the things of God?

Which gives me most pleasure as a subject of private meditation, the grace of God in my soul, and my treasure in the heavens, or my earthly riches, and the means of acquiring and preserving them?

Which do I find the most agreeable subject of conversation, Christ, and holiness and heaven, or those worldly things in which I am necessarily involved in pursuing my lawful calling in life? In short, can I apply the words of the Apostle to myself—“*Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord?*”

In proposing these, or like questions to ourselves, we should be cautious that, on the one hand, self-complacency does not pervert our judgment, and on the other, that Satan does not take the advantage of the strictures we pass upon ourselves, to weaken our confidence, and destroy our peace.

We may, Secondly, improve our subject in the way of reproof.

If we compare the lives of a large proportion of nominal Christians with the true Christian character as drawn by Christ and his Apostles, we shall be convinced that there is much less real religion in the visible church—the community of professed believers, than we might be led to suppose from superficial observation. But when it is recollected that the religion of Jesus Christ prohibits the *love* of the world—that it expressly declares that those who love the world cannot have the love of the Father in them, and that the want of love to Jesus Christ, even that love which purifies the heart, and excludes the love of the world, is not only a proof that we do not belong to Christ, but also a certain evidence of the displeasure and curse of God, we are ready to inquire where do the Christians live? Where is the church? Where are the living members of Christ?

What place of worldly amusement cannot boast of Christian attendants, and support its pretensions under the auspices of its religious admirers? Even the ball-room, and the theatre, those nurseries of every corrupt passion, can produce, from within the pales of the church, their able advocates, and firm supporters.

But it is not in these sinks of popular and fashionable vice only, that the Christian profession is prostituted, and the precepts and examples of the great Pattern of believers disregarded and dishonoured. The love of the world is deep rooted in the hearts of thousands, who probably abstain from fashionable amusements, more from the principle of avarice, than from the love of God, and delight in spiritual things.

What corroding cares, what anxious solicitude, what inward thirst, what fears, what sorrows about earthly things, do thousands feel, who profess to believe these declarations, “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee—No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.” How they shall accumulate earthly treasures—how they shall secure their possessions from loss, occupy their morning and evening thoughts. In the light of apostolical precepts and examples, all such professors may find abundant reproof. To all such the language of the text is peculiarly applicable, “Set not your affection on things on the earth.”

Lastly. Let us improve our subject as a ground of exhortation.

To all who are laying up treasure upon earth, and seeking pleasure in the perishable interests of time and sense, our subject is full of important admonition. Let such reflect on the fading nature of the objects of their affection, and the sources of their felicity. Let them recollect that their prospects and their expectations are liable to be blasted by a thousand occurrences which they have neither wisdom to foresee nor power to prevent. Let them not forget, that though the sun of prosperity may shine upon them, and affluence and plenty, in all their rich and gay variety, attend their path, the season of worldly possessions is short; and that the period is at hand when the rich and the poor will meet together—when distinctions of rank and circumstances will vanish away, and nothing remain as a ground of support and comfort to the soul but “Righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.”

Suffer then, the word of exhortation.—Lean not upon that broken reed, *the world*; it will pierce you through with many sorrows. Estimate things according to their real worth. Moderate your desire for earthly possessions, either of pleasure, wealth or honour. Never expect from this poor world what it has not in its power to give. Consider well the infinite value of that treasure which moth cannot corrupt, and which thieves cannot steal. Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. Settle, as of the first importance, the great point of the salvation of your soul. Secure your interest in Christ. Make sure of an inheritance in the spiritual Canaan—the land of promise. “Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.” Amen.



THE LOVE OF GOD TO A LOST WORLD, DEMONSTRATED BY
THE INCARNATION AND DEATH OF CHRIST.

Extract from Dr. A. Clarke's Sermon on John iii. 16.

(Continued from page 97.)

2. THIS leads me to consider God through the impulse of His own infinite love and innate goodness, providing for the rescue and salvation of the world, by giving His only begotten Son to die for it:—*God so loved the world.*

It is here asserted, that the *love of God* was the spring and source of human redemption: and when we consider the fallen, degraded, and corrupt state of the human race, we may rest satisfied, that *there* it must originate, or no where. Man could have no claim on the holiness or justice of his Maker, because

he had swerved from his allegiance, and broken his law; nor can we conceive that any other attribute of the Divine Nature could be excited in his behalf.

Yet even here is a difficulty; and one of no ordinary magnitude:—how could even *this* love be moved towards man? According to the best notions we can form of love, it never exists but in a conviction of some real or fancied excellence or amiableness in its object. Excellence may be *esteemed* for its own sake: beauty and amiableness may be *desired* on our own account. Love, properly speaking, is composed of *desire* and *esteem*; *desire* to possess, on account of the beauty or amiableness of the object; *esteem* for the person on account of mental excellence. On tracing the operation of this passion or affection carefully, we shall find that the *desire to possess* is scarcely ever, if at all, excited for mere mental excellence; and that *esteem* is scarcely ever formed for mere corporeal accomplishments.

The *old* and the *deformed* may be *esteemed*, if they have mental excellencies; and the *young* and the *beautiful* may be *desired*, though they have none. But where there is neither *beauty* nor *excellence*, love is never excited.

We may lay it down as an indisputable truth that God never acts without an *infinite reason* to justify His conduct. He must ever have a suitable *motive* to induce him to act; and a proper *object* to justify the motive. He can never act from *caprice* or *partiality*, because He acts from *infinite intelligence*, and can never be influenced by *self-interest*. What motive, therefore, could induce him to place His love upon *man*? For *what*, could He *desire* him? For *what* would he *esteem* him? Here is the difficulty which no kind of assertions can solve. The common assertion, *He did because He would*—will never satisfy the inquiring mind; and may be as well applied to acts of *vindictive justice* as to acts of *mere mercy*; and thus the mind will be left under the full empire of *doubt* relative to the conduct of God in matters of the most solemn importance, in which its own accountableness and highest interests are particularly concerned; and on which it cannot be too circumstantially informed.

On this enquiry the infinite disparity between God and man will ever present itself to the view—the perfections and independence of the Creator; and the worthlessness and wickedness of the creature. In deep astonishment we may ask with one of old, “*What is man that thou shouldest magnify him? and that thou shouldest SET THINE HEART upon him?*” Job vii. 17. In a word, what is the apparent reason why God hath so *LOVED the world*?

Strange as it may appear, I am led to conclude that we shall not get a satisfactory answer to this question without having

recourse to the *creation of man*. I will lay down as an axiom, what I think will not be disputed, and what cannot be successfully controverted, that *man is the creature of God's love*. Let us figure to ourselves, for we may innocently do it, the state of the Divine Nature previously to the formation of the human being. Infinitely happy, because infinitely perfect and self-sufficient, the Supreme Being could feel no wants;—to Him nothing was wanting, nothing needful. As *the good man is satisfied from himself*, from the contemplation of his conscious rectitude; so, comparing infinitely great with small things, the Divine Mind was supremely satisfied with the possession and contemplation of its own unlimited excellencies. From unmixed, unsullied goodness, sprang all the endlessly varied attributes, perfections, and excellencies, of the Divine Nature; or rather in this principle all are founded, and of this each is an especial modification. Benevolence is, however, an affection inseparable from goodness. God the all sufficient knew, that He could, in a certain way, communicate influences from His own perfections: but the being must resemble Himself, to which the communication could be made. His benevolence, therefore, to communicate and diffuse His own infinite happiness, we may naturally suppose, led Him to form the purpose of creating intelligent beings, to whom such communication could be made. He, therefore, in the exuberance of His eternal goodness, projected the creation of man, whom He formed in his own image, that he might be capable of those communications. Here, then, was a *motive* worthy of eternal goodness, the desire to communicate its own blessedness; and here was an *object* worthy of the Divine wisdom and power, the making an intelligent creature, a transcript of His own eternity. מֵעַט מֵאֱלֹהִים *meat melohim*, Psa. viii. 5. just less than God; and endowing him with powers and faculties of the most extraordinary and comprehensive nature.

I do not found these observations on the supposition of certain excellencies possessed by man *previously to his fall*: I found them on what he is *now*. I found them on his vast and comprehensive understanding; on his astonishing powers of ratiocination; on the extent and endless variety of his imagination or inventive faculty: and I see the proof and exercise of these in his invention of arts and sciences. Though fallen from God, morally degraded and depraved, he has not lost his natural powers: he is yet capable of the most exalted degrees of knowledge in all natural things; and *his knowledge, is power*.

Let us take a cursory view of what he has done, and of what he is capable:—He has numbered the stars of heaven; he has demonstrated the planetary revolutions, and the laws by which they are governed; he has accounted for every apparent anoma-

ly, in the various affections of the heavenly bodies; he has measured their distances, determined their solid contents, and weighed the sun!

His researches into the three kingdoms of nature, the animal, vegetable, and mineral, are, for their variety, correctness, and importance, of the highest consideration. The laws of matter, of organized and unorganized beings, and those chemical principles by which all the operations of nature are conducted, have been investigated by him with the utmost success. He has shewn the father of the rain, and who has begotten the drops of dew; he has accounted for the formation of the snow, the hail-stones, and the ice; and demonstrated the laws by which the tempest and tornado are governed; he has taken the thunder from the clouds; and he plays with the lightnings of heaven!

He has invented those grand subsidiaries of life, the lever, the screw, the wedge, the inclined plane, and the pulley; and by these means multiplied his power beyond conception: he has invented the telescope, and by this instrument has brought the hosts of heaven almost into contact with the earth. By his engines he has acquired a sort of omnipotency over inert matter; and produced effects, which, to the uninstructed mind, present all the appearance of supernatural agency. By his mental energy he has sprung up into illimitable space; and has seen and described those worlds which an infinite skill has planned, and an infinite benevolence sustains. He has proceeded to all describable and assignable limits, and has conceived the most astonishing relations and affections of space, place and vacuity; and yet, at all those limits, he has felt himself unlimited: and still can imagine the possibility of worlds and beings, natural and intellectual, in endless variety, beyond the whole. Here is a most extraordinary power—describe all known or conjectured beings, and he can imagine *more*—point out all the *good* that even God has promised, and he can *desire* still greater enjoyments!

After having made the boldest excursions to the heavens, he has dared even to the heaven of heavens; and demonstrated the being and attributes of God, not only by proofs drawn from His *works*, but by arguments *a priori*, from which all created nature is necessarily excluded! These are among the boldest efforts of the human mind.

What has man not done? And of what is he not capable! To such powers and energies, what limits can be assigned? Do not all his acts shew that he is fearfully and wonderfully made? And if such be the *shadow*, what was the *substance*? If such is *fallen* man, what was he *before* his fall! And what is the necessary conclusion from the whole? It is this; the creature in question was made for God; and nothing less than God can satisfy his infinite desires. His being and his powers give the fullest proof

that the saying of the wise man is perfectly correct: "God created man to be immortal; and made him to be an image of his own eternity." *Wisd.* ii. 23.

"But is not this over-rating human excellence, and enduing man with a dignity and perfection little consistent with the doctrine of the fall?"—I answer, No. I have appealed to *facts*, and *facts* within the knowledge of all men; and such facts as amply support all the reasoning which has been founded upon them. But, after all these proofs of *natural* excellence, we have ten thousand others of his internal *moral* depravity, and alienation from the Divine life. The general tenor of his moral conduct is an infraction of the laws of his Creator. While *lord* of the lower world, he is a *slave* to the vilest and most degrading passions: he loves not his Maker; and is hostile and oppressive to his fellows. In a word, he is as fearfully and wonderfully vile, as he was fearfully and wonderfully made: and all this shews most forcibly that he stands guilty before God; and is in danger of *perishing* everlastingly.

Now, in these two things, the physical and intellectual greatness of man, and his moral depravity and baseness, lies the reason of human redemption. As he is guilty, polluted, and morally incapable of helping himself, he stands in need of a Redeemer, to save him from *everlasting* destruction. As he is one of the noblest works of God; that in which He has manifested His skill, power, and goodness, in the most singular manner; he is worthy to be redeemed. "For it was not proper," as St. Athanasius observes, "that those should perish who were once partakers of the image of God." To save *such* a creature from such a final destruction of the *end* for which he was created, was an object worthy the interposition even of God Himself. He knew the powers with which He had endued him; and He loves every work of His hand in proportion to the degree of impression it bears of His own excellence. Though man has sinned, and has become universally depraved; yet, he has lost none of his essential faculties—they still remain: and the grandeur of the ruins shews the unrivalled excellence and perfection of the original building. God cannot forsake the work of His hands: and He still beholds him as *radically* the noblest of His creatures. And as the attention of God must be fixed on each of His works in proportion to its excellency, and the greatness of the *design* for which he had formed it; man as the most noble of His creatures, and made for the highest ends, must be the object of His peculiar regards. Of no creature but man is it said, that *it was made in the image and likeness of God*.—Neither the thrones, dominions, principalities, powers, cherubim, seraphim, archangels, or angels, have shared this honour. It is possible, that only *one order* of created beings could be

thus formed. And is it not on this account, that Jesus took not upon Him the nature of the *angels*, but the *seed of Abraham*; him with whom the covenant of redemption was made for Jews and Gentiles? Now, in this *superior excellence of the human nature*, do we not find a solution of the difficulty, why God *passed by angels*, to redeem *man*: and why, He *so loved the human race*, as to send His only begotten Son into the world to die for its redemption?

III. From this it appears that the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus was the only means by which the world could be redeemed.

Before I enter particularly into the discussion of this point, it will be necessary to speak something of *Him* who is the Author of this redemption; and who is here called God's *only begotten Son*. When we examine the oracles of God relative to the Person and character of this Divine Being, we shall find that they speak of Him as God, and clothe Him with every attribute essential to the supreme and eternal Deity. I shall quote a few of their sayings without any particular reference:—*He was in the beginning with God; he was God, and all things were made by him and for him, and without him was nothing made that was made; and he is before all things, and by him do all things consist.* He was *God manifest in the flesh*; for that *Word* which was *God*, was *made flesh, and tabernacled among us*; and in that flesh *dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily*. These are only a few of the sayings of the inspired writers relative to this subject: but they are full and conclusive; they are oracles from heaven, and have no delusive meaning; and any one of them is sufficient to prove the point. “But did His conduct among men justify this high character?” Yes; most amply.—From the first impression made by the reported miracles of Christ, Nicodemus could say, “No man can do the miracles which thou dost, except God be with him.” And every reasonable man, on the same evidence, would draw the same inference. But we certainly can go much farther, when we find Him by *His own authority and power, without the invocation of any foreign help*, with a word, or a touch, and in a moment, restoring sight to the blind; speech to the dumb; hearing to the deaf; and health to the diseased; cleansing the lepers, and raising the dead. These are works which could only be effected by the Omnipotence of God. This is incontestible. Therefore, while the cleansing of the lepers, and the feeding to the full so many thousands of men and women, with five barley loaves and two small fishes, stand upon such irrefragable testimony as that contained in the four Evangelists, Jesus Christ must appear, in the eye of unbiased reason, as the Author of nature, the true and only Potentate, the almighty and everlasting God, howsoever obscured He may seem to be, by dwelling in

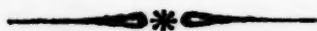
flesh.—But, as the salvation of the whole human race stands or falls with the proper, essential, underived Deity of Jesus Christ, we must take heed lest, while we profess to hold the *thing*, we destroy the *foundation* on which it rests.—We must have recourse to such scriptures as those which I have already produced:—and we must not confound the *Godhead* with the *manhood*:—we must carefully distinguish the *two natures* in Christ, the *Divine* and *human*. As *MAN*, he laboured, fainted, hungered, was thirsty; ate, drank, slept, suffered, and died. As *GOD*, He created all things, governs all, worked the most stupendous miracles; is omniscient, omnipresent, and is the Judge as well as the *Maker* of the whole human race. As *God and man*, combined in one Person, He suffered *for man*; died *for man*; rose again *for man*; causes repentance and remission of sins to be preached in the world, in His name; forgives iniquity; dispenses the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost; is Mediator between God and man; and the sole Head and Governor of His church.

He was man, that he might suffer and die for the offences of man; for justice and reason both required that the nature that sinned should suffer for the sin. But He was *God*, that the suffering might be stamped with an infinite value; and thus, instead of merely suffering on account of sin, might be a sufficient sacrifice and atonement for the sin of the world. Were Jesus to be considered merely as *man*, then it is evident that his sufferings and death could be no atonement for sin, because they could have no merit. If He be considered merely as *God*, then he could neither suffer nor die; and, consequently, *man* must be unredeemed; for without shedding of blood there is no remission; but if we consider Him as *God-man*, we see him capable of suffering; and find that the purgation of our sins was by the merit of the blood which He shed in His passion and death. Thus, as one has said, “He was *man* that he might have blood to shed; and *God*, that when shed, it might be of infinite value.” But while we distinguish the *two natures* in Jesus Christ, we must not suppose that the sacred writers always express these two natures by *distinct* and *appropriate* names:—The names given to our blessed Lord are used indifferently to express His *whole nature*: *Jesus, Christ, Jesus the Christ, the Messiah, Son of Man, Son of God, beloved Son, only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, our Saviour, &c. &c.* are all repeatedly and indiscriminately used to designate His *whole Person* as *God and man*, in reference to the great work of human salvation, which, from its nature, could not be accomplished but by such an union.

All who are taught of God use these terms in the same way. When we speak of Jesus Christ, we do not mean the man, Christ Jesus, born of the Virgin Mary; nor Him who is the

fulness of the Godhead bodily; but we mean both; the great God, even our Saviour, Jesus Christ, "who, for us men, and our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnated by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man." In this sense I invariably use these terms, when the contrary is not specified.

(To be Continued.)



Scripture Illustrated.



For the Methodist Magazine.

REMARKS ON 1 TIM. III. 16.

It is observed by a celebrated author, that upon the supposition that St. Paul believed that Jesus Christ was a mere man, he would be justly chargeable with the want of common sense in writing his Epistles. Perhaps no passage in his writings would be more unintelligible than the text now under consideration, admitting the above to have been his opinion. It is universally conceded that the manifestation of which our apostle speaks, is that which was made in the person of Jesus Christ. Had this manifestation been merely the exhibition of the moral character of God in that righteousness which was taught and practised by Jesus Christ, it would be difficult to conceive why the apostle should call it a 'great mystery,' any more than when the same manifestation was made in the virtuous lives, and moral precepts of patriarchs, prophets, and other holy men.

Those who dispute the authority of the English translation of this passage, are but feebly supported, either from ancient authorities, or from the connection and analogy of the subject. If we read, "Great is the mystery of godliness, *which* was manifested in the flesh," &c. we perceive the whole subject involved in absurdity: for to talk of the "mystery of godliness," or the gospel, "manifested in the flesh, justified in the spirit—believed on in the world, and received up into glory," to say the least, is not very intelligible. But it shows, with sufficient clearness, to what extremities the advocates of Christ's mere humanity are driven. To them it would appear a *less* evil to implicate St. Paul, as deficient in common sense, than to admit the Deity of the Son of God. And so great has been the exertion of those who deny the real divinity of Christ, to remove this formidable passage out of the way of their favourite opin-

ion, that it would appear as if they supposed it the only passage in the bible which had the appearance of maintaining an opposite doctrine. But it should not be forgotten that the gospel of St. John, chap. i. 14. asserts the same thing, concerning the authority of which the most learned critics have adduced no objection. But why should the text of St. Paul be assailed with such elaborate criticism, while that of St. John is admitted to be correct; especially when they both unequivocally assert the same thing? St Paul asserts that God was manifested in the flesh, *Θεὸς ἐφανερώθη ἐν σαρκί*: and John says, "The Word" (which just before he called God) "was made flesh." *Καὶ ὁ Λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο.*

The following quotation from Dr. M-Knight, may serve to show how feeble the authority is on which the objections to the validity of our translation rest. "The Clermont MS. with the Vulgate, and some other ancient versions, read here *ὁ, which*, instead of *Θεός, God*. The Syriac version, as translated by Tremellius, hath, *Quod Deus revelatus est in carne; That God was revealed in the flesh.* * The Colbertine MS. hath *ὅς, who*. But Mill saith, it is the only Greek MS. which hath that reading. All the others, with one consent, have *Θεός*; which is followed by Chrysostom, Theodoret, and Theophylact, as appears by their Commentaries. Mill saith *ὅς* and *ὁ* were substituted in place of the true reading, not however by the Arians,* nor by the other heretics, as neither they, nor the orthodox fathers, have cited this text."

But we venture to say that if *ὅς* or *ὁ* is admitted instead of *Θεός*, it is impossible, by any fair construction of the text, to make it any way intelligible, or even compatible with common sense. But it appears extremely difficult, not to say impossible, for all the cunning craftiness of men to avoid the conclusion, admitting *Θεός* to be the true reading. The proper harmony of the passage, with this reading, will be, "God was manifested in the flesh; God was justified (ἐδικαιώθη) by the Spirit; God was seen of angels; God was preached unto the Gentiles; God was believed on in the world; God was received up into glory.—What is the conclusion? *That Jesus Christ was God.*

* This authority from Mill heightens the probability of the correctness of Dr. Clarke's supposition relative to the occasion of the apparent difference in the ancient MSS. See his Commentary on the passage.

The Attributes of God Displayed.

EXTRACT FROM CHARNOCK ON PROVIDENCE.

GOD hath given to a believer in Christ, the *promise* as a *key* to the *chest of his Providence*, because he hath the promise of this life and that which is to come, 1 Tim. iv. 8. Of this life, not according to our desires, but necessities, wherein they shall have whatsoever they can want or desire. God exercises a special Providence over those who are afflicted, or in distressing circumstances, for it is written, "He is a helper of the fatherless," and "in him the fatherless find mercy," Hos. xiv. 3. Now what greater comfort is there than this, that He who presides in the world, is so *wise*, that he cannot be mistaken; so *faithful*, that he cannot deceive; so *pitiful* that he cannot neglect his people; and so *powerful* that he can make stones into bread if he please? God doth not govern the world only by his will, as an absolute monarch, but by his wisdom and goodness as a tender father. 'Tis not his greatest pleasure to shew his sovereign power, or his inconceivable wisdom, but his immense goodness, to which he makes his other attributes subservient.

That which was the design of God in creating, is the same in his government of the world; the communication and diffusion of his goodness. From hence we may be sure that he will do nothing but for the best, his wisdom appoints it with the highest reason, and his goodness orders it to the most gracious end: and because God is the greatest good, he doth not only will good, but the best good in every thing he does. The consideration that we are under the care of an infallible, unwearied, and righteous Governor; infallible, because of his infinite wisdom; unwearied, because of his unbounded power; and righteous, because of his eternal goodness and holiness, ought to administer the highest consolation.

To trust the Providence of God, when our warehouses and bags are full, and our tables plentifully spread, is no hard thing; but to trust in God when our *purses* are empty, and but a handful of meal and a cruise of oil is left, and all the sources of relief apparently cut off, will prove our faith, and evince that we are Christians indeed. And yet none of us are exempt from this duty of trusting Providence, but are bound to acknowledge it in our daily prayer, for daily bread; from the greatest and richest prince, to the meanest and poorest beggar. Whatever your wants are, want not faith, and you cannot want supplies.

'Tis the want of faith prevents God from doing great works for his creatures; the more we trust him, the more he concerns himself in our affairs. The more we trust ourselves, the more we shall feel the curse of him that maketh flesh his arm, though it were the best flesh in the world, because it is a departing from God. No wonder then that God departs from us, and carries away his blessing with him: while we trust ourselves, we do but trouble ourselves; but the committing our way to the Lord renders our minds calm and easy, and removes all anxious disturbing thoughts what the success shall be.

We have to deal with a God who is bound up to no particular means, or to any means at all; who is at no expense in supplying miraculous succours, and who delights to perfect his strength in his creatures weakness. He, and He only, knows what will further our good, and what will hinder it. He can set all causes in such a posture, as shall conspire together, as one link, to bring about success, and make even contrary motions meet in one gracious end. Though Providences may seem to cross and contradict one another, they shall never cross his word, and the truth of his promise; for his Providence is but a servant to his truth.—*Providence* directs us by *means*; not to use them, is to tempt our guardian: where it intends any great thing for our good, it generally opens a door, and puts such circumstances into our hands, as we may use without the breach of any command, or the neglect of our duty. To use means without respect to God, is proudly to contemn him; to depend upon God without the use of means, is irreligiously to tempt him; in both we abuse his Providence; in the one we disobey him in not using the means he hath appointed, in the other presumptuously impose upon him, for the encouragement of our laziness.—Let not any reliance upon ordinary providences induce you to act contrary to the command. No providences, wherein we have seeming circumstances of glorifying God, must lead us out of the way of duty; this is to rob God one way, to pay in another. Commit thy way to the guidance of his providence, with an obedience to his precept, and reliance on his promise, and refer the result to God. If we set up our *golden-calves* made of our own *ear-rings*, our wit, strength, and carnal prudence, because God seems to neglect us, the issue may be the same to us, as with the Israelites, and the very dust of our demolished calf may be as bitter to us as theirs was to them.

God hath as much wisdom in fixing the period of performance, as he had mercy at first in making the promise.—How presumptuous would it be for a vain ignorant world to prescribe rules to the Creator; much more for a single atom of dust, full of vanity, and worse than nothing. Since we had no part in making the

world or ourselves, let us not presume to direct God in governing us.—God being infinitely wise, and his will infinitely good, it must needs be that goodness and wisdom are the rules whereby he directs himself in his actions in the world. And what greater motive, (or argument,) can there be to persuade our submission, than wisdom and goodness transacting all things. God's counsel being the firmest as well as the wisest, it is folly both ways to resist it. We might as well murmur at God's creation, as at his providence, for that is as arbitrary as this : he is under no law but his own righteous will. Murmur not, therefore ; whatever is done in the world, is done by a wise agent, who acts for the perfection of the whole universe ; and why should I murmur at that which promotes the common happiness and perfection, that being better and more desirable than the perfection of any one particular person ?—This temper of murmuring will hinder our prayers ; with what face can we pray to that God whose wisdom we thus repine at. If God doth exercise a providence in the world, why do we murmur ? If he doth not take care of those things, why do we pray to him ? Do not presume to lead God, but be led by him ; 'tis our safety to follow him ; 'tis our sin and danger to presume to be his directors. We may lose ourselves when we are our own blind guides, and fall into a ditch ; but when we follow God, he hath wisdom to foresee the precipices we may stumble into, and goodness to divert us from them.—The church wherein God hath laid up his gospel, and those souls which are as the ark wherein God hath deposited his law, shall be shadowed with the wings of his merciful providence, in a perpetual succession of all true blessings.—All the providences of God are to preserve his law in the world ; his severest judgments are to quicken up the law of nature in them that know no other, and the law of his gospel in men that sit under it. And he hath given Christ to his church, and thereby given an earnest that still their good shall be promoted. 'Tis not to be thought that God will spare any thing else, when he hath given them his Son.

The Grace of God Manifested.

MEMOIR OF MR. JAMES BANKS.

To the Editors of the Methodist Magazine.

DEAR BRETHREN,

IF you think the following worthy a place in your excellent Miscellany, you will oblige a number of subscribers by inserting it. E. BROWN.

Mr. James Banks was born in Stamford, state of Connecticut, A. D. 1794. At the age of eight years he, with his parents, removed to the town of North-Castle, in which he resided until the close of his life. As his parents were strangers to God, walking 'after the course of this world,' he had not the advantage of those pious instructions which have a manifest tendency to engrave upon the tender heart 'the fear of the Lord,' and impart to the youthful mind a religious bent. Being favoured, however, with the preaching of the gospel by the Methodists, his mother was brought to a discovery of her lost estate, and the danger to which she was exposed whilst alienated from the life of God. This excited her 'to flee for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before her;' and she was soon admitted to the enjoyment of that peace which is by 'the blood of the cross.' Now she began to instruct her children,—admonishing them of the evil of their ways, and directing them to attend constantly on the ministry of the gospel.

By this time the subject of our memoir had acquired strong vicious habits. But the compassionate God, 'not willing that any should perish,' was pleased to penetrate his heart with a sense of his guilt and danger. On examining the state of his soul, he was convinced 'it was time to seek the Lord,' and accordingly betook himself to prayer and reading of the holy scriptures. But 'the strong man armed' was grown *too strong* to be easily bound, and habit *too confirmed* to be thrown off by a wish. He relapsed, and walked again in 'the counsel of the ungodly.' Various are the means which the Governor of the world employs 'to work his ends.' In the spring of 1811 his father was taken away by death. This awful providence was a means of bringing him again to reflect on the sins of his life, and to mourn the flight of the 'Spirit of Grace,' whom he had madly resisted. During this year he made many promises to turn from the evil of his ways; but unhappily failed in keeping them. *The sin which most easily beset him* being committed in the time of day, rendered him unfit for the work of repentance;

and when night came on his 'soul was full of troubles.' His sorrows arose to such a height that sleep departed from him, and Satan, to add to his affliction, strongly tempted him to put an end to his life. The wrath of God so heavily bore upon him, that he has been frequently heard to say, "that for aught he knew, he felt himself as miserable as if he had been enveloped in a flame of fire." Thus did his "days in one sad tenor run," until the March of 1812. All these things he endeavoured to conceal. But the cry of distress is heard through a variety of organs; and if forbidden to express itself through one, it instantly betakes itself to another; so that although he did not orally declare it, it was so manifest that one of his pious neighbours inquired diligently into his case—gave him such instructions as he thought fit, and invited him to attend a meeting appointed for prayer. He complied with the request. It was truly a season of refreshing. The Lord poured out his Spirit upon young and old. He sought the Lord with all his heart—Christians joined in making supplication on his behalf, and before the solemn services were ended, he arose and testified that his "sins were blotted out, and the love of God was shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him." From this time he denied himself, and took up his cross. He united himself to the Methodist Society—exhorted sinners to "flee the wrath to come"—prayed in the public congregation—in the family—and spent much time in private devotion. But man is a mutable being. Sad proof of this he gave by committing again "the sin which beset him." This was known to his familiar friend, Mr. Finch, who suffered one night to pass without speaking with him on the occasion. But feeling the force of that saying, "Thou shalt not suffer sin upon thy brother," he went to him and expressed his sorrow for his late offence. For this he was very thankful, and evinced all that compunction for sin which was shown by the penitent king of Israel; and in so doing he exhibited one of the finest traits of the Christian character—"Let the righteous smite me and it shall be a kindness—let him reprove me, and it shall be an excellent oil." After this God "restored unto him the joy of his salvation," and he was "stedfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." He was now appointed to the charge of a class, which place he filled with dignity and usefulness till he was called to share in purer services, and to occupy a loftier place in the heavenly world. To follow the Creator in his "goings forth," affords the *purest* pleasure of which we are capable. But when the Almighty plants his footsteps beyond the ken of human intellect, far from exciting a sensation of pain, it should increase our admiration of the Divinity, and prompt us to unreserved submission and adoration. The time was at

hand when this man of God was to "rest from his labours." About the middle of December the "last malady" fastened upon him, which was not to let go its hold till it had accompanied the body down to the grave. Nothing, however, was discovered during the first two weeks of his illness, tending to move the fears of his friends or his physician. But on Monday, January 3, his symptoms became alarming, and excited fears that he was near his end. But his rapid advance towards the eternal world did not terrify him, nor interrupt "the peace of God which ruled" in his breast. He had had too long experience of his Redeemer's goodness to distrust it in this time of trouble—and he waited only for orders "to depart and be with Christ." On being asked what were his prospects? he answered, "O! I have not a doubt! not a doubt! The veil is withdrawn, and I see him who is invisible."

During this triumph of his soul he was deeply concerned for the salvation of others. It appeared as if he already saw the tribunal erected, and sinners waiting the final decision of the righteous Judge.—"O, said he, what other sentence will be pronounced, than that which shall consign you to everlasting burnings!" Here he broke out in fervent prayer for one who once "knew the way of righteousness," but had long since "turned from the holy commandment." And having prayed for his recovery, he added, "It were better that you had remained in your sins, than after obtaining forgiveness, and 'tasting that the Lord is gracious,' you should crucify the Son of God afresh." (Let this be a warning to backsliders to "repent and do their first works, lest the Son be angry, and they utterly perish in their own corruptions.") Turning to his wife, and seeing her weeping, he asked, "What is the matter?" She gave him an indirect answer. "I did not know, said he, but you were murmuring against God—Fear not—God will do right." Some one going to his bed-side, asked, "Sir, have you any doubt of your acceptance with God, and your preparation for heaven?" He answered in a strong voice, "O no! my way is clear—not a cloud hangs over my prospect! The God in whose service I have spent the last eight years of my life, will give me a happy deliverance,"—and then exclaimed, "Glory! glory!—God is faithful that hath promised."

Tuesday 4th, the tokens of approaching death were still more apparent, and his disorder baffled the skill of the physician, and proved superior to the power of medicine. But his "heart was fixed, trusting in the Lord." He rejoiced in the midst of his sufferings.—He endured "as seeing Him who is invisible." He bore his pains with uncommon fortitude, and in the severest agonies he would cry out "O, my God, how good thou art!"

Wednesday 5th, nothing more favourable appeared. But while his body was sinking to its mother dust, his soul was rising to its father God. His pains subsiding a little, he fell asleep; but shortly awoke in an exstasy of joy, and sung the following lines:

And let this feeble body fail,
And let it faint or die;
My soul shall quit this mournful vale,
And soar to worlds on high:
Shall join the disembodied saints,
And find its long-sought rest;
That only bliss for which it pants
In the Redeemer's breast.

Much of Thursday he employed in prayer; and though he was about to join the "general assembly and church of the first born," yet he longed for the prosperity of the church on earth. He prayed for the revival of God's work—for the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom—for the poor heathen—for the conversion of sinners, and for those that were just entering the eternal world; and these petitions he put up, one would suppose, with as much zeal as though he were engaged in his own behalf.

Friday afternoon, whilst the lamp of life was going out, he triumphed more than ever in God his Saviour. "O, said he, how willing I am to die! I shall soon be at the right hand of God." He then earnestly exhorted professors of religion to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ;" to "perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord," and persevere in the way of "well-doing," to the end of their course. To those that were yet in their sins, he said, "death is coming on apace—my strength fails, and I can say but little; but I beseech you neglect not the awful concerns of eternity, but prepare to meet your God. Religion is worthy the choice of you all, and claims your immediate attention." "I feel," continued he, "that I am going direct to heaven." After making some further remarks on the excellence of religion, and the importance of communion with God, he said, apparently to enforce his exhortations, "Come see a Christian die." His attention was then suddenly turned to the mortality of our species, and their following each other in quick succession to their "long home." "See!" said he, "how they are huddling in the grave—But the grave has charms for me, and presents a delightful appearance! I feel the overwhelming power of God! O what showers of grace refresh my soul! Never, never was I so filled with the presence of the Lord." During the night he revived a little, and was heard to say, "Tell brother Finch I am of the same mind yet"—which were his last words. The most intimate

friendship had, for a long time, existed between brother F. and himself; and he had often told him of the manifestations of God to his soul, and that he was persuaded he should leave the world rejoicing. Hence he says, "I am of the same mind yet." And having "fought the good fight, he finished his course" on Saturday morning about eight o'clock. It was a solemn time; and to witness his joy and fortitude in the agonies of death filled the minds of many with amazement. He proved the truth of that saying, "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." His faith strengthened as he drew nigh to eternity, and he parted from earth without a sigh or murmur, "knowing that in heaven he had a better and an enduring substance."

"His joys be *mine* each hearer cries,
When *my* last hour arrives:
They shall be yours my *verse* replies,
Such only be your lives." COWPER.

Miscellaneous.

THE DOCTRINE OF FUTURE PUNISHMENT CONSIDERED.

(Continued from page 117.)

II. THE Justice of God. Justice in God, is defined by some as "that essential perfection, whereby he is infinitely righteous and just, both in his nature, and in all his proceedings with his creatures, prescribing equal laws as the supreme governor, and dispensing equal rewards and punishments as the supreme Judge." Psalm lxxxix. 14. Or as defined in Doddridge's Lectures, Vol. I. Lect. 89. "That governor is said to administer his government with JUSTICE, who in proportion to his legal power distributes good to the virtuous, and evil to the vicious, or in other words, treats his subjects on the whole according to their characters."

PROPOSITION.

"God is with respect to his dispensations, on the whole just to all his rational and free creatures."

DEMONSTRATION.

1. All rational and free creatures are the proper subjects of moral government, i. e. are capable of being governed by a law enforced by the sanction of rewards and punishments.

2. It is highly congruous that they should be treated with favour or severity, as virtue or vice do on the whole prevail in their tempers and conduct.

3. It would be justly accounted an infamous thing, for any created governor to act contrary to the rule of Justice, in his treatment of any such creatures committed to his government.

4. The most excellent creatures might in some imaginable instances lie under some temptations of this kind, to which God cannot possibly be exposed.

5. It would be most dishonourable to conceive of the divine being, as acting contrary to those rules, and dispensing final good and evil without regard to the moral character of his creatures. "God is therefore just in all his dispensations to mankind."

That man is a moral and accountable agent, a creature formed for religion, possessed of powers and faculties capable of contemplating the great Author of his being, and Lord of the Universe, of adoring his perfections and of acting from *a regard to his authority* and in obedience to his Laws, are truths so clear, that it would be lost labour and a waste of time, to strive to make them plainer. Man, surely is a creature of law, and what notion can we have of a law without a sanction? none. Or to what purpose would it be to make laws, if they were left without sanction of punishments against the transgressors? In all civilized countries and well regulated governments, it has been judged necessary to enforce the observance of the laws with sanctions of penalties against the violaters of them. And these very men who are so clamorous against the enforcement of the divine law by punishment, are frequently seen to recur to the laws of the government under which they live for redress of injuries which they assert they sustain. As parents too, or masters, they see no inconsistency in their principles, nor impropriety in their conduct, to make their children, or servants observe *their* commands. But when they themselves, as subjects of the Divine Law, are to be considered as objects of God's displeasure, and obnoxious to punishment, in consequence of transgressing *His* law, they then cry out against the injustice of such a procedure, as if man could be more just than God.

It is argued by them, that it would be inconsistent with the justice of God, to inflict *eternal* punishment, for offences committed in so short a space of time. To which it may be replied: 1. that it is against the infinite Majesty of God the offence is committed. And that it seems to be according to the soundest dictates of reason, and agreeable to the principles and usages of the most enlightened and best regulated governments, to graduate crimes, and to apportion punishment to their respective magnitude and enormity. What then must be the enormity of the offence that is committed against *Him* who is King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and what short of *eternal*

destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, 2 Thess. i. 9. would be an adequate punishment for such an enormous offence?

2. It may be answered that whatever reasons require a *temporary* hell, will also require an *eternal* one. As for example, the display of God's wisdom, holiness, justice, majesty, and power:—a regard to his slighted and injured Son: his violated law, his rejected gospel, his abused patience, slighted promises, despised threatenings, and the impression it may make on the inhabitants of happy worlds: see Eph. iii. 10. to whom the punishment of the damned may be an instructive spectacle.

3. It may be farther observed, that God has been pleased to advertise us of the consequences of violating his law, and of neglecting that great salvation which has been purchased by the death of Christ, and has warned us frequently and plainly of the inevitable and eternal misery that awaits the finally impenitent: so that we have not even a plea of ignorance, but are left to our own choice.

III. The Truth of God. Although in the commencement of these strictures it was assumed as a postulate, that there is a difference between vice and virtue, it may not be amiss to present the reader with a few quotations, from eminent writers of acknowledged abilities, on this subject.

“There is in virtue a natural and interior fitness, and in vice a similar unfitness and injustice, so that virtue and vice are two kinds of qualities, naturally and morally different.”—*Bayle, quoted by Robinson, Claude's Essay, vol. 2, page 403.*

“What he (God) has determined to be right, is essentially and inherently right: what he has determined to be wrong or evil, is inherently and essentially so. A thing is not good, because God has commanded it: a thing is not evil because he has forbidden it. He has commanded the *good*, because it is in its own nature *good* and *useful*: he has forbidden the *evil*, because it is in its own nature *bad* and *hurtful*.” *Dr. A. Clarke's note on 1 Kings, ii. 3.*

“To imagine that Justice in God is not the same thing as Justice among men, but something transcendent, and we know not what; is in reality subverting the *nature* of things, taking away the intrinsic difference between good and evil, and overturning the ground of all religion. For though the essence of God is really incomprehensible, yet the notion of his *moral attributes* must be easy and familiar, else the whole doctrine of the gospel would be insignificant to us. And all this is in scripture so constantly supposed to be true, that God there perpetually *appeals* to the common reason and natural judgment of mankind for the equity of his dealings with them. Ezek. xviii.

29. Isa. v. 3. Luke xii. 57. and so the apostle Paul, Rom. iii. 4. quoted from the fifty-first Psalm." *Dr. Samuel Clarke on the Attributes of God, Vol. I. page 379.*

"The conceit of Mr. Hobbes" says Dr Beattie, "that in the nature of things there is no distinction between just and unjust, right and wrong: and that in civil society the will of human governors is the sole standard of duty, and consequently of the law of nature; this conceit, I say, we need not stop to examine. For Hobbes and his paradoxes are now forgotten, as they deserve to be; and Dr. Clarke, in his excellent work on the evidences of religion, has proved, that this paradox is both absurd and self-contradictory as well as impious." *Beattie's Works, vol. 8. page 255. Philadelphia Edition, 1809.*

"Man is a creature subject to law," says Mons. Claude "that even the light of his conscience discovers an *essential difference* between vice and virtue, good actions and bad; that thence come the emotions of conscience, and the judgments we make of one another's actions, approving or condemning them; for this necessarily proves, that there is a common rule by which we acknowledge all men ought to live; and this is a truth so natural to all men, that the wickedest of all, who endeavour to elude its application to themselves, do, however, acknowledge it, when proposed in general, and applied to other subjects.— If there be a law common to all men, there must be a supreme Judge, before whose tribunal they must appear to give an account of their actions; and if there be a supreme tribunal to judge, it necessarily follows, that there are punishments ordained for the transgressors of this common law. Law, Judge, Punishment, are three things which reason and nature have joined together in indissoluble bonds. A law is no law if it does not suppose a judgment, and judgment is no judgment if it does not suppose punishment: but if these three things be inseparable from each other, they are also from a fourth, the nature of man, and dignity of his condition, as he is a *reasonable creature*, reason being only a principle of good or evil, or, if you please, a power which renders us capable of good and evil, in opposition to brute beasts, not naturally made capable of either vice or virtue. It must therefore be owned, that we are subject to a law, a law relates to a judge, a judge to a dispensation of punishments, so that these four things, reason, law, judgment, and punishment are truths of incontestible evidence, nor can any one be denied without destroying them all."— *Claude's Essay, Vol. II. page 402.*

The Apostle Paul asserts the same things in that remarkable declaration of his, Rom. ii. 14, 15. *For when the Gentiles which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves; which shew*

the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing, or else excusing one another. And with Dr. Macknight's valuable note on the latter verse I shall close these quotations. "As the *law* in this passage signifies *divine revelation*, the work of the law must be the discovery of men's duty, which revelation makes by its precepts. The same discovery is in part made by men's natural reason and conscience, on which account it is said to be written on their heart. The reality of such a *natural revelation*, made to the heathen, Taylor observes, the Apostle hath proved by three arguments: 1. By the pious and virtuous actions which many of the heathens performed: 2. By the natural operations of their consciences: 3. By their reasonings with one another, in which they either accused or else excused one another. For in these accusations they must have appealed to some law or rule. Thus, in the compass of two verses the Apostle hath explained what the *light of nature* is, and demonstrated that there is such a light existing. It is a *revelation from God*, written on the heart or mind of man; consequently is a revelation common to all nations; and so far as it goes, it agrees with the things written in the external revelation, which God hath made to some nations: for the mind of man, as made by God, harmonizes with the mind of God."

If then, it be an incontrovertible fact, that there is a natural and intrinsic difference between good and evil,—if it be a fact that God has impressed the minds of all men with this difference—if it be a fact that all men have an apprehension or notion of the Justice of God, and that punishment must naturally and of undeniable consequence follow sin, I conclude that these impressions were made by the God of Truth, and were intended not to lead men astray, but to conduct them to Him who is the fountain of Truth and Holiness.

When Christ held that conversation with his Disciples, a short period before his death, which is recorded in St. John's gospel, he promised them, after his departure, to send unto them the Comforter, who is called the Spirit of Truth, John xvi. 13. who would *guide them into all truth*. The influences and teachings of the Holy Spirit were not to be confined to the Apostles and immediate followers of the Lord Jesus Christ; but were to extend to, and be enjoyed by all his children and faithful followers to the end of the world. Now would it not be a reflection on the goodness and truth of the Deity, if his children were suffered to remain in ignorance of the cardinal doctrines of the gospel, notwithstanding they are earnestly and constantly seeking the Truth, and forming their lives according to his holy word? John vii. 17. Far from us be such an unworthy thought of God, as not only supposes him to conceal the truth from his

chosen ones, who fear his name,—Ps. xxv. 14. but to reveal it to those who are hostile to his government by denying its holy sanctions.

Considering, then, the natural and universal sentiments of men on the subject of rewards and punishments;—that the greatest critics in sacred and profane literature, and men most renowned for wisdom and piety, have firmly entertained and constantly asserted the affirmative of the question under consideration; and that the language of scripture is, on the whole, (and in things pertaining to duty and motive especially,) a plain and popular language, designed by the Spirit of truth to be understood in its popular acceptation; I hesitate not to affirm that *the finally impenitent and incorrigible sinner will be punished for ever in another life.*

(To be continued.)

For the Methodist Magazine.

THOUGHTS ON SINGING.

THE savage recounts in rude strains the valorous deeds of his ancestors and friends, while the forests ring with the shrill notes of the feathered tribe. Man, in a more refined state, in mournful ditties laments the loss of his lover or relative, and soothes his sorrows in recounting their excellencies.

The Christian chaunts in melodious accents the greatness of redeeming love, while his heart gladdens at 'the prospect of joining the heavenly choir, where angels, cherubim, seraphim, continually cry, Holy is the Lord God of Sabbaoth. Vocal music has a softening influence on the mind, raises it from earthly things, and prepares the worshipper to receive the truths of the gospel as seed sown in good ground.

An ancient Philosopher once said, "Let me make all the ballads of a country, and I care not who makes its laws:" that poetry, full of divinity and expression which is used in psalmody, will have no less effect than the philosopher's ballads.

Doctor Rush says, in his Essay on Education, p. 13, 14.—"To those who have studied human nature it will not appear paradoxical to recommend in this essay a particular attention to vocal music, its mechanical effects in civilizing the mind, and thereby preparing for the influence of religion and government, have so often been felt and recorded, that it will be unnecessary to mention facts in favour of its usefulness, in order to excite a proper attention to it."

Many that would be employed in frivolous or wicked amusements on the Sabbath, if they had been taught sacred music, would be found regularly at church, either joining in the heav-

only theme or attentively listening to the captivating strains. Few churches have thin congregations where there is good singing; and instances are not few of persons going to church to hear the psalmody, to whom the word has proved spirit and life, and who have become living members, and have died in the triumphs of faith. While thus engaged in tuning their vocal powers, they are storing their minds with the rich productions of the poets, necessarily committed to memory, which will be to them a treasure in the day of need. Their bodies will also feel the beneficial effects of this delightful exercise, as our physical powers are strengthened by use. On this subject I would again quote the celebrated Dr. Rush, Essay, p. 80, on Female Education. "Vocal music should never be neglected in the education of a young lady in this country. Besides preparing her to join in that part of public worship which consists in psalmody, it will enable her to soothe the cares of domestic life. The distress and vexation of a husband, the noise of a nursery, and even the sorrows that will sometimes intrude into her bosom, may all be relieved by a song, where sound and sentiment unite to act upon the mind. I hope it will not be thought foreign to this part of our subject, to introduce a fact which has been suggested to me by my profession, and that is, the exercise of the organs of the breast, by singing, contributes very much to defend them from those diseases which our climate and other causes of late expose them to. Our German fellow-citizens are seldom affected with consumptions, nor have I ever known of but one instance of spitting of blood among them. This, I believe, is in part occasioned by the strength which their lungs acquire by exercising them frequently in vocal music." This constitutes part of their education. In the same page, he says, that "Mr. Adgate informed me that he had known several instances of persons, who were strongly disposed to the consumption, who were restored to health by the moderate exercise of their lungs in singing."

It would be strange indeed if even singing could not be carried to excess; but if any persons injure themselves, it is because they are untaught. A good singer knows that ease is essential to melody, and if the vocal powers are strained, it is the novice that is injured; because he thinks he sings better than others, he sings louder; and why? because he knows not the difference between noise and melody. But in above thirty years observation, I have no cause to think that any persons of my acquaintance have shortened their lives a single day by singing.

Singing has been considered an essential part of divine worship with all professing Christians.* We cannot sing by na-

* The Quakers excepted.

ture any more than we can read ; and who does not desire to have his children taught to read ? And if we wish them to sing, why not have them taught ? To expect the end without the means, we consider enthusiastic ; and surely those who consider singing a prominent part of their religious exercise ought to use such means as are in their power to enable them to join in it. The Methodists are now a numerous people, spread over the face of the earth ; it is desirable that they should be enabled harmoniously to join in the praises of God wherever they meet. Many good tunes are so altered by unskilful singers, that those who have been singing the same tunes in different places, are unable to sing together, and in some instances the composer of the original would hardly be able to recognize the tune ; and these variations will continue, unless they are corrected by the notes. Nor is it strange : language would suffer as much as music, but for the use of letters ; the notes in music are as the grammar in language. It is desirable that vocal music should become a part of the education of the rising generation, because it will engage their attention, keep them from vain amusements, and bad company. I have rarely known a skilful singer deviate from the paths of virtue. It will cultivate friendly feelings among them, which will lead to acquaintance that may subserve even their temporal interest, and sweeten life : the charming powers of music would ensure their attendance with their parents at the meeting house, and eventually their minds would be opened to perceive the spirituality of the words they had so often sung ; regeneration would follow, and as their parents must decline, they might enjoy the felicity of seeing their children become pillars in the church of God.— This would soften a dying bed. The greater number of our hymns breathe such ardent strains of piety, that some have scrupled to sing them ; others, with more zeal than knowledge, have thought it criminal for those whose state they did not suit, to sing them. In answer, I would say, whoever thought it a crime for their children to learn their prayers or catechism, although they then did not perceive the spirituality of them ? Or who of us object to the scriptures being made a school-book, because the children would read them over without then understanding their depth and sublimity ? And who can say there is a greater impropriety in reciting the most devout hymns in tune, than the reading the same hymns in a suitable tone of voice, or committing them to memory ? What could be more grateful to the feelings of pious parents, than to see their own and their neighbours' children assembled together, repeating in the most captivating harmonious strains, the hymns that had so often set their own hearts on fire ? and if the children did not then understand them, the parents would contemplate with

pleasure the day when the enlightening grace of God should open their minds, apply them to their hearts, and make them as beneficial to their children, as they had formerly found them to their own souls : and what Christian's heart would not glow with gratitude in such a case ? And as many pious christians are fond of singing the praises of the Most High, but understand but little of the art ; as they have learned to pray since they have set out on the Christian course, I see no reason why they should not learn to sing with the understanding as well as with the spirit ; and if they despair of learning vocal music scientifically, they may improve themselves by practising with those who sing correctly. I have known some, with good ears and memory, who have been good singers, although unacquainted with the theory ; but the theory and practice together is the most excellent way. As Christians it becomes us to improve our talents, and sing in

HARMONY.

Philadelphia, February, 1820.

For the Methodist Magazine.

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE LIFE OF TERTULLIAN, WITH EXTRACTS
FROM HIS APOLOGY.

THE following will give us some idea of the sufferings of the primitive Christians, and the calumny heaped on them by their enemies. We may also see something of their manners, which cannot be uninteresting to those who *partially* suffer, in consequence of following the same risen Lord, and who expect to share in the same glory.

“Quintus Septimus Florens Tertullianus, was born at Carthage, the metropolis of Africa. His Father was a Roman centurion, by whom he was educated in the Gentile religion, and furnished with all the learning that was to be had either in Greece or Rome, which, together with his extraordinary natural endowments, made him one of the most considerable persons who appeared in the first ages of the Church.

He was converted to Christianity towards the end of the second century, and a persecution breaking out a short time afterwards, he published an apology in behalf of the Christian cause, in which he strongly remonstrated against the injustice and cruelty of the Pagan magistrates. *This piece was in very great esteem with the antients*, and is said, by Jerome, to contain all the treasures of human learning. It is without controversy, a most excellent performance, well worthy the perusal of every serious reader ; it may be met with in the English language in Mr. Reeves' collection of primitive apologies. We

shall subjoin the following lines by way of specimen; "If you, the guardians of the Roman Empire, must not examine the Christian cause, and give it a fair hearing; if the Christian cause is the only cause which your Lordships either fear or blush to be concerned for in public; be pleased to tolerate thus far, to let truth wait upon you in private, and to *read* the apology we are not suffered to *speak*. We enter not upon defences in the popular way, by begging your favour and moving your compassion, because we know the state of our religion too well to wonder at our usage. The truth we profess we know to be a stranger upon earth, and she expects not friends in a strange land. She came from Heaven, and there are all our hopes, and preferments—One thing, indeed, this heavenly stranger warmly pleads for, that you would vouchsafe to understand her well before you condemn her. That you hate us ignorantly, I prove from hence, because all who hated us heretofore, did it upon the same ground, being no longer able to continue our enemies, than they continued ignorant of our religion. Their ignorance and their hatred fell together. Such are the men you now see Christians, overcome by the piety of our profession; and the number of such professors are not less than they are given in; for the common cry is, town and country are overrun with Christians; and this universal revolt of all ages and sexes is lamented as a public loss; and yet this amazing progress of Christianity is not enough to surprise men into a suspicion that there must needs be some secret good, some charming advantage at the bottom, thus to drain the world, and attract from every quarter. But nothing will dispose some men to juster thought. In this alone human curiosity seems to stagnate, and with as much complacency, to stand still in ignorance, as it usually runs on in the discovery of science."

Tertullian lived to a great age. "The Marcionites, Appellites, Praxeans, Hermogeanes, Jews, Gentiles, Gnostics, &c. have all felt the weight of his reason; for he has battered down their heresies with his mighty volumes, as with so much thunder."

In his Apology, chap. xxxix. "*Concerning the discipline of Christians; their employments, and manners of living,*" we have a lively picture of primitive Christianity, as well as a true account of Paganism. How much Christendom is indebted to Christianity, let those judge who carefully read what follows.

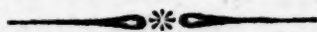
"Having vindicated our sect from the calumnies of rebellion, &c. I come now to lay before you the Christian way and fashion of living. We Christians, then, are a corporation or society of men most strictly united by the same religion, by the same rites of worship, and animated by one and the same hope. When we come to the public service of God, we come in as for-

midable a body as if we were to storm heaven by force of prayer; and such a force is a most grateful violence to God.—When this holy army of suppliants is met and disposed in godly array, we all send up our prayers for the life of the Emperors, for their ministers, for magistrates, for the good of the state, for the peace of the empire, and for retarding the final doom.

“ We meet together also for the reading of holy scriptures, and we take such lessons out of them as we judge suit best with the condition of the times, to confirm our faith either by forewarning us what we are to expect, or by bringing to our minds the predictions already fulfilled. And certainly our spiritual life is greatly nourished by reading the holy scriptures, our hopes thereby are erected, and our trust fixed and settled upon God: However, besides the reading, we continually preach and press the duties of the gospel with all the power and argument we are able; for it is in these assemblies, that we exhort, reprove, and pass the divine censure or sentence of excommunication; for the judgments in this place are delivered with all solemnity, and after the maturest deliberation imaginable, as being delivered by men who know they are pronouncing God’s sentence, and act with the same caution as if God stood visibly among them, and the censures here pronounced are looked upon as an anticipation of the judgment to come, and the sinner precondemned by God, who has sinned to such a degree, as to be shut out by the ministers from the fellowship of the faithful, the communion of prayers and sacraments and the rest of that sacred commerce.

“ The presidents or bishops among us, are men of the most venerable age and piety, raised to this honour not by the powers of money, but the brightness of their lives; for nothing sacred is to be had for money. That kind of treasury we have, is not filled with any dishonourable sum, as the price of a purchased religion; every one puts a little to the public stock, commonly once a month, or when he pleases, and only on condition that he is both willing and able; for there is no compulsion upon any: all here is a free-will offering; and all these collections are deposited in a common bank for charitable uses, not for the support of merry meetings, for drinking and gluttony, *but for feeding the poor, and burying the dead, and providing for boys and girls, who have neither parents nor provisions left to support them; for relieving old people worn out in the service of the saints, or those who have suffered by shipwreck, or are condemned to the mines, or islands, or prisons, only for the faith of Christ;* these may be said to live upon their profession, for while they suffer for professing the name of Christ, they are fed with the collections of his Church.

"But strange! that such lively expressions of Christian charity cannot pass with some men without a censure; for look (say they) how these Christians seem to love each other, when in their hearts they hate each other to death? How forward are they to stake their lives for one another, when inwardly they could cut one another's throats? But the true reason of this defamation, upon the account of styling ourselves brethren, I take to be this, because the name of brother is found with these men to be only a gilded expression of a counterfeit friendship. But you need not wonder at this loving title among Christians, when we own even you yourselves for brethren by right of one common nature; although indeed you have cancelled this relation, and by being inhuman brethren have forfeited the title of men; but by what diviner ties are we Christian brethren, we who all acknowledge but one and the same God, as our universal Father; who have all drank of one and the same Holy Spirit, and who are all delivered as it were from one common womb of ignorance, and called out of darkness into his marvellous light! But it may be we cannot pass for real brothers with you, because you want a tragedy about the bloody feuds of the Christian fraternity; or because our brotherly love continues even to the division of our estates, which is a test few brotherhoods will bear, and which commonly divides the dearest unions among you." If there have been many "bloody feuds" in Christendom since this was written, they have all been occasioned, not by Christians, but by men living in Christendom—called Christians, but possessing the spirit of their father the devil, who was a murderer from the beginning.



Religious and Missionary Intelligence.



EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM SETH LEWIS, ESQ. TO REV. ROBERT R. ROBERTS, ONE OF THE BISHOPS OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

Opeloussas, Sept. 24, 1818.

REV. SIR,

THOUGH I am personally unknown to you, I trust the subject on which I now write will sufficiently apologize for my troubling you with this letter. My object is to lay before you a sketch of our situation in this Country with regard to Religion, and to entreat you, if practicable, to relieve our wants in this respect. This circuit, at present under the care of the Rev. Thomas Nixon, seems to me much too large for a single preacher; and the more so as in the whole extent of it there is not a

single local preacher, except one Presbyterian who resides at Alexandria, and two or three of the Baptist Church who reside near the upper part of the circuit, and who sometimes come into this parish and preach to the people. But from the neighbourhood of this place to Berwick bay, a distance of near one hundred miles, the voice of a protestant minister of the gospel is scarcely ever heard except when the Methodist preacher comes round to his appointments. This with his utmost exertions he is able to do only once in five weeks, travelling each time not less than five hundred and eighty miles according to the computed distances. This alone may enable you to judge how necessary it is to send more ministers into this circuit. Where the preaching of the gospel is seldom heard, the Christian waits with patience, and rejoices when the time comes for him again to hear the glad tidings of salvation, and join in the public worship of the God he loves:—Not so the men of this world, who it is to be feared are rather “like the man beholding his natural face in a glass, who goeth and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.” Does not the long intervals between the times of preaching give time for many good impressions to wear off and be lost? Is it not to be feared that many a good seed sown that might spring up and bear fruit, is thus choaked and destroyed among the thorns, when the tender plant by more frequent watering might have been preserved alive? With the exception of a few names in this extensive circuit, all appear careless of the one thing needful, and I am confident that could you find time to pass through our country and witness for yourself the state of religion in it, your strongest sympathies would be awakened. Indeed, it seems to me important and very desirable, that if possible either yourself or one of the other Bishops should visit this almost insulated place.

This circuit is extensive,—its population already considerable and increasing. It includes five parishes, Rapide, Avagelles, St. Sandry, better known by the name of Opeloussas, St. Martin's, and St. Mary's; the two last included within the former parish of Attakapas.

The population is composed of two classes; first the original settlers, who are chiefly of French origin, and use the French language. These are, almost without exception, professed Roman Catholics: and Secondly, what is here called the American part of the people. The people in Rapide are chiefly American; in Avagelles I believe the majority are French, but of the numbers in these two I am in possession of no certain information:—In both, however, the population is fast increasing. This parish is believed to contain about eight thousand persons, probably one third of them American: St. Martin's about the same number, of which one fourth is believed to be American, and

St. Mary's about three thousand, a majority of whom are thought to be American. Amongst these are many men of education, and of considerable wealth; insomuch that perhaps the American part of the people in this circuit, in point of information and talents, may fairly vie with any equal mass of population in the union; but, as I observed before, all are immersed in the pursuit of the riches of this world, and to all appearance thoughtless of the world to come.

You will easily perceive the task the preacher assumes, and the talents he ought to possess, to stem the torrent of irreligion and vice among such a people. Talents would seem to be requisite, such as will command the respect of all.

Your ob't servant and brother in Christ.

SETH LEWIS.

Extract of a letter from Mr. Thomas L. McKenney, agent of Indian trade, in answer to an application by Bishop McKendree for information concerning the establishment of Schools, &c. among the Indians.

Georgetown, D. C. March 13, 1820.

"AT a place called *Spring-place*, in the Cherokee country, is that peaceful and interesting establishment which for fourteen years, and upwards, has kept its place, under the government of the Moravian Society, and over which the Rev. and venerable John Gambold has presided from the beginning; and from which the light of civilization has been emitted, though feebly, till this time; and now this apostle to the heathen, having been spared to witness it, enjoys the enviable gratification of seeing those feeble glimmerings multiplied, until a wide display of light surrounds his desert home, with which is happily mingled, and to no inconsiderable extent, the more interesting and lovely radiance of Christianity. Accompanying this you will receive a letter addressed to me by one of the first members of his wilderness church—a *native of the forest*, who owes the improvement which this letter sets forth, to the care and guidance of this good man. To give it additional interest, I have had the copy taken by a Choctaw youth who has lived in my family for nearly two years. The letter is *genuine*, and *unaltered*, except in its punctuation."

A COPY.

Mountjoy, January 15, 1818.

HONOURED SIR,

You often write to my Dear brother Gambold, and I hear that you are a true friend to the poor despised Indians. God

bless and reward you for it, and grant you long life and happiness.

Now, as my uncle, Charles Hicks, is gone to Washington, to plead our cause before our dear father, the President, and make our distresses known, I take the liberty to write this to you. I wish you to be on my uncle's side, if I dare ask this favour: for we poor Indians feel very much humbled. I really know if our friends there, with you, knew our situation, they would sincerely pity us! Oh, for the sake of God's love and mercy pity us! If we do not get help from that quarter we are undone.

Our neighbouring white people seem to aim at our destruction. They have not the fear of God before their eyes; they seem not to believe in a Saviour; they set wicked examples before the poor ignorant Indians; they insult our people who bear it patiently. I cannot cease from weeping to our merciful Saviour, to shew mercy to us, and help from the hands of our oppressors. We are persuaded if our honoured father, the President, could see our great distress into which we are brought, he would weep over us, he would pity us, he would help us. Yet we live far off from him, and he cannot see us. Yet we constantly look from a distance to him for help, as poor helpless children look up to their father, crying to have pity on them.

Since I have experienced grace and mercy from my dear Saviour, and have become truly happy in him, and with his children, it is my constant prayer, that my whole dear Nation might enjoy the same blessing that I enjoy.

This grieves me more than I can tell, that at a time when there is a good prospect that many more will join the few who have embraced Christianity, we shall be driven away from the land of our fathers, which is as dear to us as our own lives; from our improved farms, from our beloved teachers, into a land strange to us; yea, into savage life again. Dear Sir, I declare I would prefer death to such a life again.

I am in hopes, and many more with me, that our beloved father, the President, will certainly help his poor children, when he hears from my uncle our distressed situation. Yes, God, the father of all mankind, will incline his heart to consider our case and help us. Oh, Sir, I implore you for the sake of the dear crucified Saviour, who shed his blood for the poor red as well as white people, continue to be our friend. Pray for us; plead for us; and the blessings of those who are ready to perish will come upon you, and the great Judge of all flesh, will, at the great day of retribution, remember your kindness to our poor people.

Signed,

MARGARET ANN CRUTCHFIELD.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM ANTHONY BANNING TO
BISHOP M'KENDREE.

August 9, 1819.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

I embrace the opportunity of informing you that it has not been long since I was called by an impression of mind, as I believe from God, to visit several settlements that were destitute of the preaching of the gospel, where I had good times.— Amongst the rest I went to the Sandusky: I went through several of the Indian villages, had an interview with Mr. Walker, who is the agent placed at Sandusky; I discoursed with him pointedly and affectionately on the subject of religion. I had reason to believe from his friendly disposition, that he was convinced of the necessity of an interest in Jesus Christ. His wife I found to be a very intelligent woman, and I thought, from her conversation, not far from the kingdom. I conversed with many of the Indians, through Mr. Walker, who I found were seeking God; and others who were savingly interested in the merits of Jesus Christ. I had a meeting appointed on Tuesday, at their council house, which commenced about eleven o'clock. Mr. Walker interpreted for me. Soon after preaching began, such solemnity and weeping as was discoverable, I have not often seen amongst our Christian congregations. I truly felt the place awful by reason of the presence of God. When I was done they commenced singing, being assisted by a black man by the name of Steward. I preached again in the afternoon, as our meeting did not break up till near sun-down.

Many other circumstances occurred in the time of worship, as indications of friendship, and their devotion to God, which would swell my letter too much to relate.

I conversed with Steward, who gave me full satisfaction with respect to his piety, and his object amongst the Indians. Mr. Walker, and some of the Indians, further satisfied my mind about Steward, so that too much could not be said in his favour as to his usefulness amongst the Indians, considering his circumstances and opportunities.

It has struck my mind forcibly, that if the Conference should be disposed to send any person to preach to the Indians, that it should be left in such a situation as to let them fairly understand the nature of the case; and if application should be made to Congress for assistance, that this black man may not be forgotten. Mr. Walker, and the Indians, requested me to make their situation known to Conference: I promised to do it, and to visit them again next month, and spend some time with them.

Please to excuse the length of my letter, but make what use you please of it, making allowance for haste, &c.

I am with due respect, yours, &c.

ANTHONY BANNING.

To the Editors of the Methodist Magazine.

Rockingham Ct. Virginia, Feb. 20, 1820.

DEAR BRETHREN,

IT is with much pleasure I announce to you the prosperity of Zion, and the gracious work of God in this part of the world. In August last we held a Camp-meeting near Harrisonburg. The place was in a beautiful grove—the tents were generally well built of plank, with good floors, so as to be quite comfortable. At night the encampment was so well illuminated with lamps and light wood, as to enable the preacher to see the countenances of a considerable part of the congregation; and such were the order and decorum of the place, as to make it quite agreeable and safe for all who wished to be benefited by the meeting. It is true, some have said there was much disorder; but we have generally observed that disorderly persons can see the most disorder, and those who have attended the least to preaching, and been the most troublesome to the Managers, have had the most illiberal remarks to make. The best characters in the county were present, night and day, and concur in saying great good was done. The number of conversions was not as great, as at some meetings of the kind, at which I have been; but the work was deep and genuine. Since that time the sacred flame has spread through different sections of the country, and is yet progressing gloriously. In one village called Waynsborough, in Augusta county, where Satan has long reigned, and dissipation has been viewed as a mark of honour, there has been a marvellous change.

At the commencement of this revival there were symptoms of those extravagances which often characterise great revivals; but by some cautious remarks on the subject, and a little attention to the hymns and tunes used in singing, they soon disappeared, and the work has progressed with a tender and deep sense of the presence of God. Much weeping and little noise have been among us. In some instances children have attended—sought and found the pardon of their sins through the blood of Jesus, and returned to their parents with open arms and streaming eyes, declaring what God had done for their souls; and their unaffected simplicity, and astonishing fluency, with

the manifest love and concern for their souls, have had a blessed effect on their connections; and thus it is now working through whole families. Some that a few months ago were vile opposers, are now zealous members of the Church, and bid fair to become ornaments to the best of causes. In the course of six months we have added more than two hundred persons to the society, nearly all of whom, we have cause to believe, are happily converted to God. With pleasure I add, the whole district (Greenbrier) is in a prosperous way. In Greenbrier circuit, near three hundred souls have professed conversion during the last year. Join with us in ascribing glory, glory, to the Great Shepherd and Bishop of souls for what he has done for us unworthy mortals. May we learn to be more humble and thankful and faithful.

THOMAS KENNERLY.

To the Editors of the Methodist Magazine.

Lynn, March 8, 1820.

DEAR BRETHREN,

WE are requested by the *Missionary Society* of this place, to forward to you for publication in your *Magazine*, extracts from another letter from our Missionary, the Rev. Joseph A. Merrill, addressed to said Society; dated Feb. 15, 1820.

ENOCH MUDGE.

ELIJAH HEDDING.

“ Since my last communication, I have made two visits into the upper Coos country, and am happy to state, that the prospect still brightens. In Lunenburg there is a gracious work of religion. I have attended a number of meetings in that place, and the power of God was evidently manifested among the people. The tears and sighs of mourners clearly discovered that the word was not delivered in vain. At one time nearly the whole assembly rose and requested prayers, and after the congregation was dismissed, a number of mourning and weeping souls tarried, and still desired we should pray for them. They readily prostrated themselves at the foot of the cross, while our prayers were offered to God in their behalf. Several have professed faith in the Lord Jesus, and others are still struggling for deliverance.

“ There is a good work in the Congregational society in this town. At a meeting not long since, the preacher, after giving an invitation to the people to rise to be prayed for, and counting forty, urged the importance of their kneeling, from the example of Christ and the apostles; he then kneeled, and was

joined in this scriptural and rational act by nearly all the congregation.

"About one hundred have been added to the societies on Stratford circuit since the last conference; and, perhaps, more than that number on Landaff circuit.

"I have made a tour of about five weeks into Maine; preached in the towns of Shelbourn, Rumford, Bethel, Livermore, Augusta, Sidney, Gardner, Litchfield, and Vienna. In some of these towns I preached four and five times, and have reason to think the labour will not be lost. The prospect in several towns is good;—in Vienna about sixty have experienced religion of late, and the attention in most of these places is considerable.

"You observe in your letter that several wished to know how many miles I have travelled, and how many sermons I have preached since my appointment. I am not much in favour of this practice, generally; but as it is the wish of my friends, and has been a practice among Missionaries, I shall here state for the satisfaction of the Society, that I have visited and preached in seventy towns; travelled three thousand six hundred and seventy miles, (in about eight months) and preached two hundred and forty sermons; but how many families I have visited, I cannot tell.

JOSEPH A. MERRILL."

To the Editors of the Methodist Magazine.

Bristol, R. I. March 21, 1820.

DEAR BRETHREN,

As your excellent Magazine is intended to benefit the Christian world, and especially the members of the Methodist Church, if you think the following account of what God has done through the instrumentality of the Methodists in the town of Bristol, (R. I.) worthy of publication, you will oblige a number of your readers by inserting it.

YOURS, &c.

ALLEN WARDWELL.

About the year 1791, a sea captain, providentially in the city of New-York, was happily brought to experience the truth; and, being a citizen of Bristol, on his return home he said to his friends and neighbours, in the language of the woman of Samaria, "Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" A few were affected by this circumstance; but to most of the people it seemed like an idle

tale. This captain invited the Methodist preachers to come to Bristol.—They preached Jesus, a full and perfect Saviour, offered to the chief of sinners.—They taught salvation by faith in His all atoning merits.—They urged the necessity of being born again, and great was the effect of their ministry. Although there was great opposition, both from the world, and from professors of religion, yet God owned His word—sinners were awakened and converted; and at the close of the first year a little society was formed consisting of about eighteen members who rejoiced to bear the cross, and follow the footsteps of their divine master.

The work continued gradually to increase from year to year—The infant society grew in number and in grace. Great peace and union dwelt among them. Having no chapel, the Court House was occupied for preaching on the Sabbath, and the meetings of the society attended in private houses.

In 1805 the society had so increased as to enable them to build a neat and commodious chapel, which has always been well attended.

In 1812 a powerful revival broke out in the place; about *one hundred* joined our church—an equal number was added to the Congregational and Episcopal churches, and a few to the Baptist.

As a considerable number of our members are sea-faring men, our society has often been scattered, and the number remaining in town frequently fluctuating; but, blessed be God, union and love have wonderfully prevailed, and not an instance has occurred in which a member in the fellowship of the church has died either at home or abroad who has not given a dying testimony of the truth of our doctrines, and the power of divine grace.*

About the first of February last, several of our brethren went down to Bedford to a Quarterly Meeting. In this place there is a powerful revival of religion. On their return they appeared to be greatly quickened in spirit, and the holy flame soon began to kindle among others. Our stationed preacher, brother Thomas Tucker, now began to witness an answer to his many prayers, for his heart had often sighed on account of the iniquity of the people, and the low state of the church, and his daily and fervent prayer had been that God would revive his work.

*It should be recorded to the praise of God, that from among the members of this society who have fallen asleep in the Lord, an unusual number have been distinguished in their last sickness and death, with extraordinary manifestations of the presence and love of Christ; and have gone, not merely in peace and comfort, but also in songs of triumph and victory, to the paradise of God.

The brethren now united with him with all their hearts—prayer was incessantly offered to God for the out-pouring of his Spirit ; and such a wonderful work has ensued as perhaps was never before witnessed in New-England, in the same space of time.

At our Quarterly Meeting, on the 19th and 20th February, pleasing symptoms of the revival appeared ; but on the 26th, at a private house, the flame burst forth. While one convert, happy in the Saviour's love, was declaring what God had done for her soul, the power of God seemed to rest on all present—Saints rejoiced, while many sinners cried aloud for mercy, and went from the place deeply wounded for sin.

We soon found that no private house would contain the multitudes whose attention was called up, and consequently repaired to the chapel, which has been uniformly crowded with all classes of people, night and day. Loud have been the cries of the wounded ; and apostolic zeal has attended the preacher and the brethren, and great indeed has been Zion's strength.

The means which have been used in this marvellous work, have been feeble, and God has taken the weak things to confound the mighty. Meetings have generally begun with prayer and exhortation, after which the mourners have been called round the altar, where the children of God have joined in prayer in their behalf. From *thirty* to *sixty* have crowded the sacred place, and at almost every meeting some souls have experienced the power of converting grace. The testimonies of young converts have had a blessed effect. The work has been principally among the youth of both sexes—rather more males than females. Children have experienced converting grace, and have gone home and preached to their parents ; and in some instances almost whole families have been happily brought to the knowledge of the truth. Some as vile characters as any in the place, have become servants and preachers of righteousness.

Among the other Societies there is great seriousness, and a prospect of a good work.

For about two weeks our chapel has been opened every day, in the morning, at two o'clock, p. m. and in the evening till near midnight.

The first week *seventy-eight* gave evidence of having passed from death unto life, and it is believed that about *one hundred and fifty* have witnessed a work of renewing grace in their hearts, in our chapel, within three weeks. The work still goes on solidly—many crowd the altar for prayer. Sometimes *one hundred* souls have been crying for mercy in the congregation at the same time ; and an equal number, like bottles of new wine, ready to burst forth with the praises of God.